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Garden Cameos: Hazardous household waste day is April 17

By Linda Cobb
For the Herald-Journal

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If you think that community residents and county government can't work together, think again. The story I am going to tell you is the best example of cooperation between county government and Spartanburg residents.

Several years ago, Dr. Jim Weeks was trying to find the right place to dispose of some garden chemicals. He did not want to throw them in the garbage where they would wind up in our county landfill. His conscience would not let him pour it down the drain and poison our water system. So he called around the county to find out what was the correct thing to do. Local DHEC told him there were only four counties in the state that had disposal programs for this kind of thing.

Weeks took chemistry in college before he went to medical school, and he knew there had to be a proper disposal program for our county. So several years ago he formed a committee, invited master gardeners to join and now boasts that 50 percent of the group are master gardeners.

Weeks continued to call public officials to try to get some funding together to organize a hazardous waste pick-up day. That is when he called Mike Garrett, public works director of Spartanburg County; Mary Lyn Eaddy, recycling coordinator for Spartanburg County; Joe Maple, master gardener; and Shelley Robbins, part of Upstate Forever. Together they had several meetings where they mapped out their strategy.

Garrett was a big help to Weeks and his group. Garrett says they don't want garden chemicals, corrosives, acids and the like dumped into the landfill. They want to keep it out of the ground water and landfill. Garrett says the public really does not know where to dump it. So Weeks' Household Hazardous Waste Group gives people an option to do it right, be more "green," so to speak. Garrett helped this group get funding from the county. The group studied different systems that work in other counties to see what was the best procedure.

"Weeks and his group proved that it takes more than just one person to do things like this," Garrett said. "Getting other citizens involved and using that energy makes it all happen."

Weeks and his committee got funding from the county, and last year they held their first collection on Oct. 10. They hired Care Inc. from Georgia to handle the disposal of the waste. A total of 466 cars showed up that day. Care Inc. went to each car and removed the items. They disposed of all of the waste according to EPA guidelines, and the event was a big success.

This year the collection day is planned from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. April 17 in the parking lot of Boiling Springs High School, 2251 Old Furnace Road. This is an opportunity for residents of Spartanburg County to bring aerosols, cleaners, corrosives, batteries, paint, thinners, pesticides and chemicals and have them properly destroyed without



harming our environment.

In addition, there will be a lawn mower exchange where you can bring in your gasoline-powered lawn mower in exchange for a voucher to purchase a Neuton battery-operated, cordless mower at a discounted price.

"By offering this special collection day where residents of Spartanburg County can recycle their old gas-powered lawn mower and most household hazardous materials, we enable families to get involved in becoming more environmentally aware of and responsible for the items they produce," Eaddy said. "The event is a way to further encourage and sustain Spartanburg's commitment to making their community a better, cleaner and safer place to live."

It is amazing in this day and age of enlightenment with regard to being green and preserving our Earth that something like this could have gotten lost in the shuffle, so to speak. But thanks to a special group of residents and some great county employees, Spartanburg County now has a set way of disposing of household hazardous waste. And that is very green.

AROUND TOWN

The First African Violet Plant Society will hold its annual plant sale from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 23 and from 9 a.m. to noon April 24 at the Upstate Resource Center in Boiling Springs, 1850 Old Furnace Road. Drop by and pick up some of the most wonderful houseplants ever.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, join the folks at Motlow Creek Gardens in Campobello for their Easter Parade. There will be exhibits and programs held on the hour. Call Rhonda at 864-468-4848 for more information.

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